

**SERIAL NO. 09/612,551  
DOCKET NO. NEC WNZ-2212  
AMENDMENT E**

**EXHIBIT A**

# Section 17

## Measurement and Control Circuits

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### Principles of Measurement Circuits\*

#### DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPLES OF MEASUREMENT

1. **Precision** is a measure of the spread of repeated determinations of a particular quantity. Precision depends on the resolution of the measurement means and variations in the measured

\*The author is indebted to I. A. Whyte, L. C. Vercellotti, T. H. Putman, T. M. Heinrich, T. I. Pattantyus, and R. A. Mathias for their suggestions and constructive criticisms. The author wishes to thank Mrs. Sandra Mahan and Mrs. Leslie Arthrell for their fine work in typing the manuscript.

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value caused by instabilities in the measurement system. A measurement system may give precise readings, all of which are inaccurate because of an error in calibration or a defect in the system.

2. **Accuracy** is a statement of the limits which bound the departure of a measured value from the true value. Accuracy includes the imprecision of the measurement along with all the compounded errors in the measurement chain extending from the basic reference standards to the measurement in question.

3. **Errors** may be classified into two categories, systematic and random. Systematic errors are those which consistently recur when a number of measurements are taken. Systematic errors may be caused by deterioration of the measurement system (weakened magnetic field, change in reference resistance value), alteration of the measured value by the addition of extraneous energy from the element being measured, response-time effects, and attenuation or distortion of the measurement signal. Random errors are accidental, tend to follow the laws of chance, and do not exhibit a consistent magnitude or sign. Noise and environmental factors normally produce random errors but may also contribute to systematic errors.

TABLE 17-1 Factors for Establishing Confidence Interval\*

Number of observations	Confidence level			
	0.50	0.90	0.95	0.99
	Confidence interval			
2	$X \pm 1.00s$	$X \pm 6.31s$	$X \pm 12.71s$	$X \pm 63.66s$
3	$X \pm 0.82s$	$X \pm 2.92s$	$X \pm 4.30s$	$X \pm 6.67s$
4	$X \pm 0.77s$	$X \pm 2.35s$	$X \pm 3.18s$	$X \pm 5.83s$
5	$X \pm 0.74s$	$X \pm 2.13s$	$X \pm 2.78s$	$X \pm 4.60s$
6	$X \pm 0.73s$	$X \pm 2.02s$	$X \pm 2.57s$	$X \pm 4.03s$
7	$X \pm 0.72s$	$X \pm 1.94s$	$X \pm 2.45s$	$X \pm 3.77s$
8	$X \pm 0.71s$	$X \pm 1.90s$	$X \pm 2.37s$	$X \pm 3.50s$
9	$X \pm 0.71s$	$X \pm 1.86s$	$X \pm 2.31s$	$X \pm 3.30s$
10	$X \pm 0.70s$	$X \pm 1.83s$	$X \pm 2.26s$	$X \pm 3.17s$
11	$X \pm 0.70s$	$X \pm 1.81s$	$X \pm 2.23s$	$X \pm 3.04s$
16	$X \pm 0.69s$	$X \pm 1.75s$	$X \pm 2.13s$	$X \pm 2.95s$
$\infty$	$X \pm 0.67s$	$X \pm 1.64s$	$X \pm 1.96s$	$X \pm 2.53s$

\* Modified and abridged from Table IV of R. A. Fisher and F. Yates, "Statistical Tables for Biological, Agricultural, and Medical Research," Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1963. By permission of the authors and publishers.

The arithmetic average of a number of observations should be used to minimize the effect of random errors. The arithmetic average or mean  $X$  of a set of  $n$  readings  $X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n$  is

$$X = \Sigma X_i / n$$

The dispersion of these readings about the mean is generally described in terms of the standard deviation  $\sigma$ , which can be estimated for  $n$  observations by

$$s = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma(X_i - X)^2}{n-1}}$$

where  $s$  approaches  $\sigma$  as  $n$  becomes large.

A confidence interval can be determined within which a specified fraction of all observed values may be expected to lie. The confidence level is the probability of a randomly selected reading falling within this interval. Confidence intervals are given in Table 17-1 as a function of the number of observations and the required confidence level. Detailed information on measurement errors is given in Ref. 1, Par. 17-160.

4. **Standardization and calibration** involve the comparison of a physical measurement with a reference standard. Calibration normally refers to the determination of the accuracy and linearity of a measuring system at a number of points, while standardization involves the adjustment of a parameter of the measurement system so that the reading at one specific value corresponds with a reference standard. The numerical value of any reference standard should be capable of being traced through a chain of measurements to a National Reference Standard maintained by the National Bureau of Standards.

The range of a measurement system refers to the system's designed to provide satisfactory measurement. An instrument having a linear scale which is only within 2% at half scale.

The resolution of a measuring system is defined as the quantity which can be distinguished. The resolution can be measured per unit input. Instruments having a square-law scale as linear-scale instruments. Amplification and deflection in the region of interest and thereby increased by the magnitude of the signal than ground.

Noise may be defined as any signal which does not produce in measurement systems by mechanical or electrical coupling. The coupling of external noise can be reduced by electromagnetic shielding. Electrical noise is often harmonics, as well as at radio frequencies.

In systems containing amplification, the noise introduced because the noise components within the amplifier affect the noise in the output determines the lower limit.

Even if external noise is minimized by shielding, introduced by random disturbances within the system cause motion in mechanical systems, Johnson noise in electrical elements. Johnson noise is generated by electrons in a circuit. The equivalent rms noise voltage developed over a temperature  $T$  is equal to  $\sqrt{4kT\Delta f}$ , where  $k$  is Boltzmann's constant,  $\Delta f$  is the bandwidth in hertz over which the noise is observed.

5. The bandwidth  $\Delta f$  of a system is the difference between the upper and lower frequencies passed by the system (see Par. 17-44). The bandwidth is the variation in the quantity being measured. The lower the response time is approximately equal to  $1/(3\Delta f)$ . A longer response time, it makes the system more susceptible to noise.

6. Environmental factors which influence the accuracy of measurements include temperature, humidity, magnetic and electrostatic influences, and position. Temperature changes can alter the values of thermally generated emfs, cause variations in the density and properties of matter. Humidity affects resistances of organic materials. DC magnetic and electrostatic fields which are sensitive to these fields, while ac fields can influence the stability of instruments. Energy imparted to the system in the form of shock or vibration, if severe enough, can result in permanent damage. The measurements because of the influence of magnetic, electric, and gravitational fields.

## TRANSDUCERS, INSTRUMENTS, AND INDICATORS

10. Transducers are used to respond to the state of a system and convert it into a convenient electrical or mechanical quantity according to the variable to be measured. Variable classification includes physical, chemical, nuclear-radiation, electromagnetic, and thermal transducers. Detailed in Sec. 10.

11. Instruments can be classified according to whether they are analog or digital. Analog instruments include the d'Arsonval (moving-coil) meter, moving-iron instrument, electrostatic voltmeter, galvanometer, and potentiometric recorders. Digital-indicating instruments have a readout of the quantity being measured and have the advantage of rapid and accurate readings.

12. Indicators are used to communicate output information to the observer.